

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3638

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, LE
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH UNIFIL ADVISOR
JEAN CLAUDE AIME

1. UNIFIL ADVISOR JEAN CLAUDE AIME CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AND
DCM JUNE 29. DURING ONE-HOUR DISCUSSION, HE MADE THE FOLLOW-
ING POINTS:

2. SAUNDERS AS UN REP. AIME CONFIRMED THAT UNSYG WALDHEIM
HAD DESIGNATED SPECIAL REP JOHN SAUNDERS TO ACT ON POLITICAL
AS WELL AS ECONOMIC MATTERS. AIME DOWNPLAYED THE IMPORTANCE
OF SAUNDERS' ROLE, SAYING THAT NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT WAS
PLANNED AND THAT SAUNDERS' PRIMARY DUTY WOULD BE TO PASS
MESSAGES BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN BOUTROS AND WALDHEIM IN
EMERGENCIES WHEN IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ERSKINE OR AIME TO BE
HERE. HOWEVER, AIME DID SAY THAT HE THOUGHT SIILASVUO WOULD
BE MAKING FEWER VISITS TO BEIRUT NOW THAT SAUNDERS HAD BEEN
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GIVEN THIS ADDED RESPONSIBILITY.

3. LEBANESE ARMY TO THE SOUTH? AIME SAID HE AND JONAH AHD
HAD LONG DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER HOSS ON THE QUESTION
OF LAF DEPLOYMENT TO SOUTH LEBANON. HOSS HAD STRESSED THAT
ARMY WOULD NOT GO UNTIL UNIFIL WAS FULLY DEPLOYED IN SOUTH
LEBANON AND MILITIAS NO LONGER CONTROLLED ANY PART OF IT.

UN OFFICIALS HAD POINTED OUT THAT COMPLETE UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT DID NOT NECESSARILY MEAN COMPLETE CONTROL. HOSS HAD REPLIED THAT IN HIS MIND DEPLOYMENT IMPLIED CONTROL. ASKED IF HE MEANT MILITIAS MUST BE DISARMED HOSS SAID, "IDEALLY, YES." IMPLICATION WAS HE WOULD SETTLE FOR LESS. AIME ALSO REFERRED TO A NEWSPAPER REPORT LAST WEEK IN WHICH SHIA IMAM MUSA SADR, AFTER SEEING SARKIS, HAD SAID THAT SARKIS DID NOT INTEND TO SEND LAF SOUTH UNTIL SEPTEMBER. AIME THOUGHT THIS MIGHT IN FACT BE SARKIS' INTENTION. AIME REMARKED THAT THE PRESENCE OF LAF UNITS IN LEBANESE/ISRAELI BORDER REGION WOULD PROBABLY MAKE UNIFIL'S TASK MORE DIFFICULT; NEVERTHELESS, HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE GOL COULD SEND 300-400 MEN TO A RELATIVELY QUIET PLACE LIKE TIBNIN, FOR INSTANCE, SIMPLY TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICIAL LEBANESE PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON. THIS WOULD HAVE A VERY POSITIVE EFFECT, HE SAID, ON THE MORALE OF THE LEBANESE IN THE AREA.

4. THE GOOD FENCE. AIME REMARKED THAT DURING HIS MOST RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH BOUTROS HE HAD NOTED A CHANGE IN BOUTROS' POSITION REGARDING THE GOOD FENCE. IN EARLIER TALKS, BOUTROS HAD TENDED TO BRUSH ASIDE THIS PROBLEM SAYING THAT IT WAS SOMETHING FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS AFTER MORE URGENT PROBLEMS WERE SOLVED. IN JONAH'S JUNE 28 MEETING WITH HIM, HOWEVER, BOUTROS HAD STATED FLATLY THAT WHEN GOL RESUMED CONTROL IN SOUTH LEBANON, THE GOOD FENCE WOULD HAVE TO BE CLOSED. AIME REMARKED THAT THIS WAS LIKELY TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT ISSUE

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TO RESOLVE. IN HIS MEETINGS WITH THE ISRAELIS (WHICH INCLUDED HADDAD) IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, THE ISRAELIS HAD BEEN ADAMANT THAT THE GOOD FENCE MUST STAY OPEN. BEN GAL HAD MAINTAINED THAT SINCE THE GOOD FENCE WAS OPEN BEFORE THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON MARCH 13, UNIFIL HAD NO MANDATE UNDER RESOLUTIONS 425 AND 426 TO CLOSE IT. WE POINTED OUT THAT BOUTROS HAD MAINTAINED ALL ALONG THAT GOL COULD NOT CONCUR IN GOOD FENCE OPERATION.

5. THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. AIME SAID THE UN HAD ASKED THE GOL TO ISSUE ORDERS TO HADDAD INSTRUCTING HIM TO COOPERATE WITH UNIFIL. INSTEAD, BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL PRESSURES IN BEIRUT, THE GOL HAD TOLD HADDAD AND HIS MEN TO GO BACK TO THEIR BARRACKS AND GIVE UP ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC SECURITY. THIS ORDER HAD GREATLY COMPLICATED UNIFIL'S TASK

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AND GIVEN THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS THE CHANCE TO TAKE OVER BEFORE UNIFIL COULD GET THERE. AIME SAID THAT HADDAD, SHIDIAC AND THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS WERE WORKING VERY CLOSELY TOGETHER AND THAT ANY APPEARANCES OF DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN THEM WERE SIMPLY PART OF A SHOW. HE CONFIRMED THAT THESE MILITIAS HAD GROWN SUBSTANTIALY IN SIZE AND STRENGTH DURING THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION AND SAID THAT LARGE NUMBERS HAD GONE TO ISRAEL FOR TWO WEEKS OR MORE OF INTENSIVE TRAINING. AIME SAID THAT SOME OF THESE MILITIAS WERE IN TOUCH WITH LEBANESE GROUPS IN BEIRUT, BUT THEY WERE SUPPLIED AND CONTROLLED BY THE ISRAELIS. (HE REMARKED THAT UN OFFICIALS HAD ONCE ASKED GEN KHOURY IF IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THEY TALKED TO GEMAYELS AND CHAMOUN ABOUT CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. KHOURY REPLIED INSTRUCTIONS GO FROM SOUTH TO NORTH, NOT VICE VERSA.) IN AIME'S VIEW, ISRAEL HAS THE POWER TO FORCE THE MILITIAS TO GO BACK TO THEIR HOMES, "ALTHOUGH RELUCTANTLY." WE AGREED THAT ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS WAS THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA'S FEAR THAT UNIFIL INTENDED TO DISARM THEM. THE MILITIAS WERE
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RESISTING A UNIFIL TAKEOVER NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY WERE FEARFUL THAT UNIFIL WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP THE PALESTINIANS OUT, THEY ALSO ASKED, WHO WILL DEFEND US WHEN YOUR MANDATE EXPIRES IN SEPTEMBER? AIME THOUGHT A COMBINATION OF US PRESSURE ON ISRAEL AND STEADY, SLOW UNIFIL PRESSURE ON THE

MILITIAS MIGHT ENABLE UNIFIL TO ESTABLISH ITSELF THROUGHOUT SOUTH LEBANON. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE SIZE AND STRENGTH OF THE MILITIAS, UNIFIL WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO IMPOSE ITS WILL ON THEM.

6. DISCUSSIONS WITH PALESTINIANS. AIME REMARKED THAT ARAFAT WAS BEING HELPFUL, IN PART, AT LEAST, BECAUSE HE VALUED HIS GOOD RELATIONS WITH WALDHEIM. FOR THIS REASON, ARAFAT WAS ALWAYS ANXIOUS TO SETTLE PROBLEMS ON THE SPOT RATHER THAN HAVE LOCAL UN OFFICIALS REFER THEM TO NEW YORK AND THEREBY GIVE SENIOR UN OFFICIALS THE IMPRESSION HE WAS BEING UNCOOPERATIVE. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS, ARAFAT HAD TOLD THEM PLO HAD "TWO BATTALIONS" BEHIND UNIFIL LINES IN SOUTH LEBANON. WORKING FROM INFORMATION PROVIDED BY PLO, UNIFIL HAD INVESTIGATED, AND FOUND ONLY 190 MEN, AND HAD SO INFORMED ARAFAT. ARAFAT HAD REPLIED, "YOUR INFORMATION IS NOT AS GOOD AS THE ISRAELIS' AND THEY SAY I HAVE 3,000; I WILL SETTLE FOR 2,000." IN MORE SERIOUS VEIN, ARAFAT HAD SAID IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR UN TO IDENTIFY ALL PLO MEMBERS IN THE SOUTH BECAUSE MANY OF THEM WERE UNARMED AND LOOKED LIKE FARMERS. AIME FELT PLO'S INFALTED FIGURES WERE ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY LARGER PRESENCE ON GROUND WITH CLAIM THAT MANY PEOPLE HAD STAYED BEHIND.

7. COMMENT: HOSS REMARK TO EFFECT LEBANESE WOULD NOT SEND ARMY SOUTH UNTIL UNIFIL FULLY DEPLOYED AND I CONTROL, IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT LEBANESE HAVE BEEN SAYING TO US, I.E., THAT WE SHOULD GET ISRAELIS (NOT UNIFIL) TO BRING MILITIAS UNDER CONTROL. PERHAPS THIS IS DISTINCTION WITHOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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A DIFFERENCE. IN ANY EVENT, SINCE UNIFIL IS UNLIKELY TO CONTROL THIS AREA FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS (IF EVER) WE LOOK TO BE IN FOR A LONG WAIT.
PARKER

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